

France, and in Beirut and other nations, which was led by the ISIS terrorists. We will reflect on those poor victims who died as a result of their terrorist acts. And we will also reflect on acts of heroism and wisdom that emerged from this terrible tragedy, heroism on the ground in Paris and other places by those who defied these terrorists and those who risked their lives to bring those responsible to justice, and the wisdom and compassion shown by leaders around the world not to exploit this situation.

When President Hollande of France announced that his country would receive 35,000 refugees after this attack, he made it clear that he would not hold those innocent, helpless refugees accountable for the terrible misdeeds of these terrorists. When the nation of Canada said they would accept thousands of refugees, even after the Paris attack, they showed the wisdom and good sense to differentiate those helpless victims of terrorism around the world who are seeking refuge on our shores from those who perpetrated these terrorist acts. Then listen to the debate on Capitol Hill. Listen to the unanimous consent requests made this morning by the junior Senator from Texas. It is not consistent with that ethic. It is not consistent with those values.

To say we will accept only refugees who are the victims of genocide would close the doors to Cuban refugees who came to the United States, trying to escape all of communism and what it meant to their families. It would have closed the doors to Soviet Jews persecuted in that country who were looking for freedom and came to the United States as refugees. I can list countless others who were not the victims of genocide, but they were the victims of persecution, they were from war-torn countries, and they were the victims, as Senator LEAHY has said, of gang rape and terrorism.

Listen to what has been said on the other side of the Rotunda and in this Chamber today. It does not merit the kind of appreciation of American values that we insist on when we make these critical decisions. In time of war, in time of attack, sometimes rash decisions are made. I predict that in the course of history, as people in the future reflect on what happened in the Senate and the House of Representatives this week, they will hope that saner voices will prevail.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's time has expired.

The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, the Senator from Vermont spoke against overheated rhetoric and in the very next breath accused me of being anti-American, echoing the attack President Obama gave standing on the soil of Turkey. Let me say that speaking the truth is not terrorism.

My Democratic friends invoked their Irish and Italian grandparents. Well, when my Irish and Italian grand-

parents came to this country, they did not pose a terrorist threat because they were not seeking to murder innocent citizens. When my Cuban father came as a refugee, he was not a terrorist threat seeking to murder innocent citizens. This is an example of the Democratic Party's refusal to acknowledge the qualitative difference. Perhaps if they cannot see it, they can hear it, because in 2009 the Obama administration released Abu al-Baghdadi, the leader of ISIS. As he was being released, Abu al-Baghdadi turned to Army COL Kenneth King and said: See you in New York.

ISIS intends to murder Americans, and if the Democratic Party cannot distinguish between ISIS terrorists and Irish and Italian and Jewish and Cuban immigrants, then they are ignoring reality.

I would note that the Expatriate Terrorist Act is very, very similar to legislation that was introduced in 2010 by Democratic Senator Joe Lieberman and Senator Scott Brown, both of whom apparently, under the view of the Senator from Vermont, are un-American as well. I would note that at the time, then-Senator Hillary Clinton said about legislation virtually identical to my legislation:

United States citizenship is a privilege. It is not a right. People who are serving foreign powers—or in this case foreign terrorists—are clearly in violation of the oath which they swore when they became citizens.

Yet President Obama and the Senator from Vermont apparently now consider Hillary Clinton's statement to be un-American. It is the essence of being American to say the Commander in Chief should protect the safety and security of this country.

I would note that the assistant Democratic leader invoked President Hollande in France. President Hollande said he would support stripping French citizenship. We should protect ourselves every bit as much as the other nations on Earth.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. FISCHER). The Senator's time has expired.

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. COLLINS. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

TRANSPORTATION, HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2016

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will re-

sume consideration of H.R. 2577, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 2577) making appropriations for the Departments of Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes.

Pending:

Collins/Reed amendment No. 2812, in the nature of a substitute.

Collins/Reed amendment No. 2813 (to amendment No. 2812), to make a technical amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. MURPHY. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

TERRORIST ATTACKS AGAINST FRANCE AND SYRIAN REFUGEES

Mr. MURPHY. Madam President, I wish to speak about Friday night for a few moments. In Connecticut, on Friday night the world really did stop. Thousands of people in my State watched their television set or their smartphone as images like this one poured in from the blood-soaked streets of Paris: horrific reports, scores dead, more badly wounded. Deep down, in Connecticut, we ached deeply for Paris's loss. Maybe it is because for those of us who hail from the former colonies, we feel a special sense of brotherhood with the French. In my boyhood town of Wethersfield, CT, I grew up a stone's throw from the tavern where Washington and Rochambeau met to plan their campaign against the British. We pain for France because of 250 years of friendship and also because we know, unfortunately, exactly what they are going through. That ominous sense of familiarity and that perverse bond among nations that have been visited by mass terrorist attack are part of the reason why we ached so acutely on Friday night, over the weekend, and into this week.

But also, these pictures cause us pain because we fear this isn't the end of the mass slaughter. We grieve because the massive scale of this particular attack, on a nation that already had its antenna tuned for a potential attack, made us realize how vulnerable we still are today to a similar assault. The threat of another large-scale extremist attack just became so much more real for millions of Americans who had, frankly, begun to settle into an understandable comfortable complacency, a decade and a half since that last major terrorist attack just miles from Connecticut's border.

In Connecticut, to be honest, people are mad and they are scared. Having watched all of this coverage, I understand why. But images such as this also move the people of my State. These are two little kids, Ralia and Rahaf, 7 and 13 years old. This is where they sleep at night, on the streets of Beirut. They went there from Damascus after their mother and their brother were killed by a grenade. Along with

their dad, they have been sleeping on the streets for over a year. Rahaf, who is 13, says she is scared of the “bad boys” in Beirut on those streets at night. When she talks about that, Ralia starts crying.

I don't want to cast with a broad brush all of the people of my State, but I think I can safely say that their hearts ache for pictures like this, for images such as the one of the 3-year-old boy—just about the same age as my youngest son—who washed up limp and dead on the beach in Turkey. My neighbors are not comfortable living in a country that simply turns its back on little kids who have been ravaged by torture and rape, dying from barrel bombs and executions and slipshod escape vessels.

There has been a lot that has disturbed me about the debate here in Washington, across the country, and on the cable news channels since Friday's massacre: the hyperpartisanship, the concern for one religion over another, the refusal to wait for facts before jumping to policy conclusions.

Maybe what has disappointed me the most is the suggestion that the people in my State or the people of this country or this Congress need to make a choice between acting on concern for this image or acting out of concern for this image. The suggestion is that if your priority is protecting us from a Paris-style attack, you can't show compassion for those two little kids. If you want to show compassion for these innocents, then you compromise national security.

Here is the truth: Not only are these two priorities not mutually exclusive, they are actually interdependent. There is simply no choice to be made between protecting this country and helping the victims of terror. We can take steps together—Republicans and Democrats—to make sure terrorists do not get into this country, and we can continue in the best traditions of America to be, as our Statue of Liberty says, a home for “your tired, your poor, your huddled masses.” How do I arrive at this conclusion that we can do both, that we can protect our country and respond to the victims of terror in Syria? First, I asked the questions my constituents are asking: How can we be sure refugees fleeing Syria aren't going to pose a risk to the security of the people who live in my State in Connecticut?

Yesterday I sat through two exhaustive briefings to seek the answer to this question, and here is what I learned. There is no one who comes to the United States, in any immigration category, that receives a more comprehensive and exhaustive background check than refugees: biometrics, international background checks, interviews, fingerprints—a process that takes anywhere from 18 months to 2 years to make sure we get it right. It is exhaustive, and it is probably why of the nearly 2,000 Syrian refugees who are resettled in the United States this

year, not a single one has been connected to terrorist activity. The other reason for this, as I learned yesterday, is because the profile of the refugees we are prioritizing for entry into the United States tells the story as well. We largely bring women and children, the frail and the sick, those who have been beaten, raped or tortured by terrorists—the ones who simply cannot survive in the refugee camps. It means that of all the Syrians who are already here, only 2 percent of them are young, single males. We aren't bringing into the United States the type of people who fit the profile of those who could pose a danger to us.

The second reason I have concluded that ending the refugee program really will not make us safer is because of conversations I have had with experts about the nature of ISIS itself. I don't think you can argue that ISIS has been contained. Paris showed us ISIS can be lethal anywhere, anytime. Over the past year, ISIS has proffered two narratives to its recruits. The first is that this so-called caliphate is expanding. It is an unstoppable, inexorable force that challenges young Muslims to get on board now before it overtakes them by force. The second is this narrative that there is a war between the West that is left over from Iraq, left over from Afghanistan, left over from the aftermath of Sykes-Picot, left over from the Crusades. It is this idea that the Western World is out to destroy the East, they argue, and we have to fight for our survival.

The first narrative is still strong, but it is not strong as it used to be. ISIS isn't expanding its territory in the Middle East anymore. They have 25 percent less territory than they did last year at this time. The second initiative now actually becomes more important, and the Paris attacks are evidence of this. Indiscriminate attacks on civilians in a place like Paris are designed, in part, to provoke a response from the West to feed this argument over a clash of civilizations. That doesn't mean we shouldn't respond, it doesn't mean we shouldn't respond forcefully, but it should wake us up to the reality of the necessity of this us-versus-them narrative that is essential to the growth of ISIS. The story of the Christian world's marginalization of the Muslim world is the nourishment that feeds the growth of ISIS.

That is what makes our response to the Syrian humanitarian disaster interwoven into our strategy to defeat ISIS. Turning our back on those who have been tortured and raped and battered and beaten by Bashar al-Assad, after having welcomed massive refugee flows from Cuba and Vietnam and Bosnia, feeds straight into this radical Sunni argument that we are at war with Islam. Imagine the glee in Raqqa when they see postings of American politicians arguing we should take Syrian refugees but only the Christian ones and not the Muslim ones. That is a story line that is an ISIS recruiter's dream.

None of this is to suggest we shouldn't be taking the fight to ISIS in Syria and Iraq. I have been a vocal supporter of the thousands of bombing runs by American planes, of our efforts to support the Iraqi Army and the Peshmerga as they seek to kill as many ISIS fighters as possible. Fighting ISIS inside Syria and Iraq is absolutely necessary in order to defeat them. So we engage in that fight with the knowledge that our involvement may also help with recruitment. We weigh the benefit against the cost and we fight.

When it comes to turning away the victims of terror inside Syria, if we are able to build a system that screens out any Syrians who pose a threat to the United States, then the meager benefit can never outweigh the costs of feeding this anti-Muslim narrative. Now that narrative is more important than ever to sustain ISIS.

Here is the most important point to make. The people I represent don't believe we can just stand still in the wake of Paris, even if they believe the screening program is robust enough. They may be convinced of this, but they are certainly right that we can't accept the status quo. My worry over the past week is that this hyperfocus on the refugee program that has only brought in 2,000 immigrants last year—mostly women and children—misses the forest for the trees.

The Visa Waiver Program brings in 20 million people a year—not 2,000—20 million people. It has background checks, too, but nothing like what is applied to refugees. There is a good reason for this difference, because the countries that are part of the Visa Waiver Program are our allies—countries we can generally rely on—but with several of the Paris attackers bearing EU passports, making them eligible for the Visa Waiver Program, this sense of security we have had with these countries has been shattered. If we want to have a real conversation about changing our immigration laws to better protect this country, then focusing on 20 million lightly vetted visitors rather than 2,000 highly vetted visitors sounds like the better approach.

There is absolutely room to make the Visa Waiver Program stronger. There are a myriad of security information sharing agreements between the United States and Europe and among countries within Europe that have not been executed. Now is the time to demand that these agreements, like the umbrella law enforcement agreement between the EU and the United States, be executed, be signed. Now is the time for both the United States and Europe to require that every EU nation modernize their protocols for uploading law enforcement and anti-terrorism information onto the databases that we use to compile our no-fly list. If these agreements aren't signed or these protocols aren't updated, then we need to consider whether an unreformed Visa

Waiver Program is still in our national interests.

If our goal is really to keep America safe from infiltration of terrorist groups, this reform is the most important one we can make to our immigration system, and it should bring together Republicans and Democrats.

Every day that I go home to my 7-year-old and my 4-year-old, I am reminded that my most sacred duty here is to enact policy that keeps them safe and keeps my constituents safe. The hundreds of calls and emails that my office has received since Friday reinforces for me this commitment, but I live in a nation like no other. I live in the United States of America, a nation that in the late 1800s had emerged from Civil War to become a beacon for the oppressed and the repressed all over the world and millions showed up on our shores—people like my Irish and Polish ancestors—and a nation that was spreading its wings over the world, beginning to understand the impact for good that we could have. It was during that time that the poet Emma Lazarus called America “The New Colossus.” The feeling was that we were capable of a greatness, a bigness of both achievement and heart that the world had never witnessed and exceptionalism, one that still burns bright today.

The argument that America cannot both protect itself and protect those who are fleeing terrorism feels so small. It feels so contrary to this idea of exceptionalism that has been at the foundation, at the root of the American story. It feels very weak. In fact, the moments where we have made choices solely out of fear to marginalize others are moments we now regret. We interred Japanese Americans in camps because we were at war with Japan or hesitated to take Jewish refugees fleeing the Nazis out of fear that some might be spies. In hindsight those measures did not reflect on who we really are as a nation.

The America I live in does not settle for false choices that make America look and feel small or powerless. We can save the terrorized and protect ourselves from being terrorized at the same time. In fact, we have to do the former to accomplish the latter. In doing so we can come together as a Congress and as a country to make good policy and to recall that sense of American exceptionalism that caused Emma Lazarus's poem to end up on a statue that was sent as a present to the United States from France as a reminder of our unbreakable bond with them.

I yield the floor.

Ms. COLLINS. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that at 2 p.m. today, the Senate proceed to executive session to consider the following nominations: Calendar Nos. 366 through 371; that the Senate vote on the nominations without intervening action or debate; that following disposition of the nominations, the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate; that no further motions be in order to the nominations; that any statements related to the nominations be printed in the RECORD; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action and the Senate then resume legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Maine.

Ms. COLLINS. Madam President, for the information of our colleagues, we are making good progress in clearing a number of amendments that have support on both sides of the aisle. I expect we will be able to proceed with an amendment offered by Senator CORNYN and Senator REID shortly, and in the meantime I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to set aside the pending amendment in order to call up my amendment No. 2844.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Kentucky.

Mr. PAUL. Madam President, reserving the right to object, over 1,000 Americans have called my office in the last couple of days, and they are very concerned about admitting people from the Middle East when we are not sure what their intentions are. The Boston bombers were here under the refugee program, and two Iraqi refugees came to my State with the intent to buy Stinger missiles.

I have asked for a very simple amendment. I ask unanimous consent to have an amendment placed in the queue for a vote that lets the American people vote on whether we want to bring more people here from the Middle East and whether we are doing an adequate job of screening these people. I think having a vote on that is a reasonable request, and therefore, until I am allowed to have a vote for which I think the American people are clamoring, I will continue to object.

I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. PAUL. Madam President, I also ask unanimous consent to bring forward

my amendment to limit and end the subsidized housing for new people who come here from the Middle East. My amendment is No. 2843, and I ask unanimous consent that I be allowed to set aside the current business and bring my amendment forward.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maine.

Ms. COLLINS. Madam President, on behalf of myself and the ranking member of the subcommittee, Senator REED, I object. We are in a process where we are trying to clear amendments, and we are making good progress on this bill. I understand Senator PAUL has raised an issue that is issue, but it does not belong on this bill and indeed would result in this bill not progressing.

We are trying to get back to regular order on the appropriations process. With cooperation, I am confident we could finish this important appropriations bill today. We could show the American people that we can govern and fund essential transportation and housing programs that are included in this bill. By and large, we have had excellent bipartisan cooperation. I was hoping we could move to the amendment offered by the Senator from Texas—a member of the Republican leadership—and cosponsored by the Senate Democratic leader. It is an amendment that I believe we could dispense with quickly, and we would then be able to continue to work through the amendments on this bill.

Since the amendment from the Senator from Kentucky would grind this bill to a halt and does not belong on this bill—and there will be other opportunities to deal with this issue because the House is going to be passing legislation this week dealing with the issues raised by the Senator from Kentucky—I will object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The majority whip.

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, I agree with the senior Senator from Maine and the bill manager that the concerns Senator PAUL has raised, which are shared by many of us as far as the adequacy of the screening process for the refugees coming to our country, is a serious matter. It is a matter, as the Senator from Maine has said, that will be voted on today, and my prediction is that there will be broad bipartisan support for the additional security measures contained in that bill.

This is a transportation bill, and it is very important for us to get our work done, and unfortunately that is appearing more and more difficult.

If I could say a word about my amendment because this is an important matter to me and to my State, as well as to other States. My amendment would direct the Secretary of Transportation to conduct cost-benefit determinations for new airports which are seeking entry into the federal

tower program but have been unnecessarily prohibited by the Federal Aviation Administration. The FAA's current moratorium on accepting new airports negatively impacts airport sponsors that have already submitted their applications to the FAA, including the North Texas Regional Airport in Grayson County, TX. I know there are airports like that around the country, which is why this amendment has such broad bipartisan support.

This amendment would simply require the Secretary of Transportation to process applications that have already been submitted—in some cases years ago—but have been punished by this arbitrary administrative delay. It would not have any negative impact on any current contract tower airports and would only allow new airports to be admitted to the program if funds are available.

I am grateful to Senator COLLINS and Senator REED for their favorable consideration of this amendment, and I hope we can work through the objection raised by the Senator from Kentucky so we can process this legislation and pass it in the near future.

NATIONAL ADOPTION MONTH

Madam President, on another note, I wanted to say a few words about National Adoption Month.

Yesterday, Senator GRASSLEY, the chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, convened a very important hearing on the subject of international adoptions; specifically, ensuring that the process—which at times can be bogged down in bureaucratic redtape and take an excruciatingly long time to complete—remains a priority for this administration.

Last year, if my recollection serves me correctly, there were about 22,000 intercountry adoptions. In other words, there were families here in the United States who wanted to adopt these children who, in many circumstances, have very poor prospects in the countries where they were born.

As I said, this is National Adoption Month. I am glad Senator GRASSLEY enabled us to highlight the challenges of people who are trying to adopt children from, for example, the Democratic Republic of the Congo. There are about 400 adopted children the government of the Congo will not release. Yesterday, many of us, on a bipartisan basis, met with the ambassador and asked: What is the way forward for these families and these children, many of whom are in pretty poor circumstances back in their home country.

Americans, of course, adopt not only children from their local communities or their State, but from literally around the world. It is something we ought to encourage. Devoted parents who make the decision to adopt ought to be commended for providing an opportunity for a better life for a child in need and for providing support and the love that all children need and deserve.

One of the things that struck me yesterday during the hearing, as we heard

from the State Department, are the numerous protections that are embedded within the adoption process to ensure that these internationally adopted children are placed in safe homes and how important they are for protection of these children. These measures include commonsense safeguards such as thorough background checks, intensive interviews with potential parents, multiple visits to the child's future home, and, of course, proper vetting of other people who will be living under the same roof. This is important for the protection of this adopted child.

This is a process that puts safety and the interests of the child first, and I think we would all agree that is exactly where that priority should stand: the best interests of the child first.

So while it was reassuring to me to hear about these rigorous requirements that our government has put in place to protect these adopted children, I was reminded that protecting children during the placement process should not be just limited to when we are talking about adoptions. Over the last two fiscal years, more than 95,000 unaccompanied children have crossed our southern border without legal permit, the large majority of them making a perilous and deadly journey across thousands of miles from Central America. We can only imagine the horrible circumstances that parents must see and the poor prospects for their own children's future for them to turn them over to essentially criminal organizations that will then ferry them, if they are lucky, from their country of origin through Mexico and into the United States. But the surge of which we are all familiar—again, 95,000 unaccompanied children in just the last 2 years—has exposed the vulnerability of our southern border to human smugglers and transnational criminal networks. As a matter of fact, I asked one of the witnesses at the hearing yesterday: Are the same criminal organizations that engage in human trafficking and illegal immigration and illegal importation of drugs—are they all the same people?

He said: Absolutely.

I don't know how we can turn a blind eye to some of the illegal immigration issues and to say we are completely outraged at the drug trafficking going on between our countries or the human trafficking going on between our countries when, in fact, that activity is being conducted by exactly the same criminal organizations that have one interest in mind, and it is not the best interest of the child. It is money. They view children as a commodity just as they view drugs as a commodity.

Yesterday's hearing showed us that the lack of border security can cause a humanitarian crisis that endangers the lives of children who were turned over by their parents and then smuggled into the United States. We know from numerous reports and testimony that children on this journey are preyed upon in the form of human trafficking,

rape, and even murder. Many of them don't even make it here because they are killed along the way, held hostage, perhaps for ransom, or otherwise assaulted. To this day, we still have no idea how many children and parents have perished during this unprecedented surge across our border. Once these children arrive here in the United States, I think—I would hope—we would all agree that it is our joint and collective responsibility to do what we can to protect them and ensure that they are no longer preyed upon by criminals and human traffickers.

Current law requires that within 72 hours of being located by law enforcement officials, a child be placed in the protective custody of the Department of Health and Human Services so they can be protected from the danger of abuse and exposure to forms of violence. Unfortunately, current law also requires that these children be released, sometimes even to nonfamily members, sometimes even to noncitizens, without any assurance or systematic protections that they are being sent into a safe environment—certainly nothing even remotely approaching the sort of care and precautions that we use when it comes to international adoptions.

As I heard yesterday, the administration is capable of making these assurances in the context of international adoptions, so why would we not take steps to ensure that the same level of protection is there for these unaccompanied children?

During the surge of these children across our border in 2014, I stood right here and I posed two very important questions: Could anyone in the administration say with certainty that the children being released from U.S. custody were leaving with an actual family member? Believe it or not, there is no legal requirement that these children be turned over to an actual family member. Also, could the administration say with certainty that none of these children have been handed over to an adult with a criminal record?

The answer to both of these questions was and continues to be no, and that ought to shock our collective conscience. Sadly, we don't know how many of these children have fallen into the wrong hands.

Earlier this year, four individuals were indicted for their involvement in a trafficking ring that smuggled unaccompanied Guatemalan children into the United States and forced them into slave labor at egg farms in Ohio. These children faced horrific conditions, including long work hours, abuse, threats, and exploitation. But even more shockingly, many of these children could have been spared if the Federal Government and the Department of Health and Human Services had an adequate system for screening and vetting the nongovernmental sponsors for these unaccompanied children. None of

the protections—none of the protections—that are available for international adoptions have been applied here to protect these children.

The human traffickers in this case that I mentioned were able to gain custody of these children by simply showing up at an HHS shelter, telling the U.S. Government that they were family friends, and submitting a fake family reunification application. This is unacceptable, and it is our duty to these children to make sure that we do a better job of protecting them, just as we do in cases of international adoption.

I know that our colleague from Ohio, Senator PORTMAN, in his oversight role in the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs is taking a hard look at this process through which we move unaccompanied children out of protective custody and into the hands of potential danger—not even family members, not even citizens, no criminal background check, and absolutely no way to know what the government is turning these children over to. I look forward to reviewing the findings of his forthcoming report, and I hope we can make efforts to implement his recommendations.

Last Congress, I was proud to be the author and sponsor of a piece of legislation that we called Helping Unaccompanied Alien Minors and Alleviating National Emergency Act—or the HUMANE Act—which would require all potential sponsors of unaccompanied children to undergo a rigorous biometric background and criminal history check. This is bipartisan legislation. Though there is certainly more we can do to ensure an acceptable screening process, I believe that the protections in my legislation are a good start and would make a difference.

So I urge my colleagues, or anybody else who may be listening, as we reflect on National Adoption Month and the appropriate protections we put in place for international adoptions, to think about these almost 100,000 other children who have crossed our borders over the last few years and who were afforded none of the protections that we afford adopted children.

I truly hope we will take a comprehensive look at the concerns I have raised here today.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

Ms. COLLINS. Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. HIRONO. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

IMMIGRATION REFORM

Ms. HIRONO. Madam President, last November, faced with Congress's failure to act, President Obama, through Executive action, took a courageous and practical step on immigration.

Like every President since President Eisenhower, President Obama exercised his legal authority to prioritize U.S. immigration enforcement and make our system more fair and just. The most significant parts of the President's Executive actions were those intended to keep families together and give more people the opportunity to come out of the shadows.

The President announced an expansion of the successful Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, or DACA, program. He also created a new Deferred Action for Parents of Americans and Lawful Permanent Residents called DAPA. DAPA allows the undocumented parents of U.S.-born children to stay in this country with their families.

Since its creation in 2012, DACA has given nearly 700,000 undocumented young people the opportunity to pursue their dreams through education and jobs. Sixty percent of DACA recipients have been able to find new jobs, contributing to our tax base and our economy. Experts estimate that DACA recipients will contribute \$230 billion to our GDP over the next decade.

Together, the expanded DACA and DAPA programs will mean that around 5 million more individuals will be able to work legally, pay their taxes, and care for their families.

While the President's actions generated a great deal of support and excitement, they also generated opponents who challenged these actions in court. These court challenges resulted last week in a Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals ruling that further delays help for these 5 million people in our country. As Judge Carolyn King stated in her very strong dissent in the Fifth Circuit case, "a mistake has been made."

The administration is acting to swiftly appeal this decision to the United States Supreme Court. I am hopeful that the Supreme Court will find that the President's actions are lawful and that justice for millions of workers and families will eventually be served. We cannot continue to be inactive in Congress while millions of people remain in the shadows. Yet, here we are.

Today, politicians—from Presidential candidates to sitting Governors—appeal to our Nation's fears in arguing against any meaningful reform of our broken immigration system. Conjuring up shadowy images fuels these fears—violent gang members from South America, terrorists from the Middle East. In their divisive rhetoric and in their rush to build walls and close our borders, they neglect the faces of those they demonize, and they forget the facts.

The National Academies of Sciences recently released an authoritative look on how immigrants assimilate into the United States. That report paints a very different picture from what you will hear from Republicans on the campaign trail. For example, the Acad-

emies found that neighborhoods with more immigrants have lower rates of crime and violence than comparable nonimmigrant neighborhoods, and foreign-born men are incarcerated at ¼ the rate of native-born Americans.

Today's immigrants are learning English just as fast as prior waves of immigrants; only our schools aren't equipped to help them as well as they should be. Eighty-six percent of first-generation male immigrants have jobs, as do 61 percent of women. In fact, immigrant men with the lowest education levels are more likely to have jobs than comparable groups of nonimmigrant men.

These paint a very different picture than gang members and terrorists. In fact, it is clear that immigrants are an asset to our communities and our Nation. The vast majority of people come to America seeking a better life for themselves and their families. They work extremely hard and in many cases under very difficult circumstances.

Despite our country's being a nation of immigrants and the great benefit immigration has meant to our culture and economy, immigration remains a difficult issue in America.

Just last month we celebrated the 50th anniversary of the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965. Prior to President Johnson's signing that law, the United States had a racially discriminatory quota system. In fact, prior to 1965, Asians were essentially excluded from immigrating to the United States. The 1965 law wasn't perfect, but it moved our system forward by focusing on family reunification—not racial quotas amounting to racial discrimination—as a guiding principle.

Since the 1965 law, our Nation has benefitted greatly from the millions of immigrants from all over the world who have come here. Immigrants have built vibrant communities, become titans of industry, expanded American arts and music, and strengthened our public institutions. Their positive contributions have changed America and what it means to be an American.

No matter how toxic the immigration rhetoric may be right now, we can't stop pushing to improve our broken system. President Obama's Executive actions were neither a complete nor a permanent solution for immigration reform, but they were positive steps forward. It has been more than 2 years since the Senate passed its comprehensive immigration reform bill with 68 bipartisan votes. I was proud to have worked on this bill as a member of the Senate Judiciary Committee.

Sadly, the House refused even to consider the bill—even after Republicans released their immigration principles, acknowledging the brokenness of our immigration system. Congress remains deeply divided, and there is still no indication that we will be able to pass comprehensive immigration reform any time soon, leaving 11 million people in our country in the shadows.

As the only immigrant serving in the Senate today, I remember very well my mother's courage in bringing her three children to this country so that we could have a chance at a better life. That is what comprehensive immigration reform will mean to the 11 million people living in the shadows in our country—a chance for a better life for themselves and their families. These are mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers; and they are neighbors and friends. They are not looking for handouts. They are looking for the chance for a better life, and that is the universal appeal of our great country.

As leaders, we need to act to make real for these millions of people the promise of America. We need to pass comprehensive immigration reform soon.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. INHOFE. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to leave the bill for a couple of minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maine.

Ms. COLLINS. Madam President, I would yield to the Senator from Oklahoma for the purpose of explaining an amendment that he has at the desk, and a modification—a very good amendment, I might add.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. INHOFE. Thank you, Madam President.

It is my intention to ask to set aside the pending amendment for the purpose of considering the Inhofe amendment No. 2820, and I want to explain what this is.

Today the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the FAA are working on the next generation radar system. We have talked about this for a long period of time. I think the Senate knows that this Senator has been active in aviation for a long time, and this is something we have been working on together. The next generation radar system, called Multi-function Phased Array Radar, or MPAR, is comprised of individual radar stations capable of both air traffic tracking and weather surveillance.

The new system will replace the multiple systems separately maintained by the FAA and NOAA and allow the consolidation of the number of discrete radar sites in the United States by about a third and yet do a more thorough job.

To support the development of the next generation radar, it is important for the FAA and NOAA to be working together and one not getting out in front of the other one. For that reason—and I think my junior Senator, who is going to be working on this, agrees—there is some concern that the FAA is getting out in front of NOAA on the selection of technology to meet both goals. We would clarify that in the amendment.

What I will be asking for is the consideration of amendment No. 2820, as

modified. The modification is at the desk now, expressing the sense of the Senate that the FAA and NOAA continue to work together so that one agency doesn't get out ahead of the other and ensuring that the priorities of both agencies are met. Sometimes you have to get involved with the bureaucracies when there is more than one working on it.

At the proper time, I will be wanting to do that. There is a courtesy being extended to another Member to be involved perhaps in this.

So with that, I will yield the floor and be prepared to offer my amendment.

Ms. COLLINS. I want to thank the Senator from Oklahoma for his courtesy to one of our colleagues who is on his way to the floor to repeat an earlier ritual that we went through when one of our colleagues attempted to make an amendment pending.

So in deference to that colleague, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. INHOFE. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. INHOFE. Madam President, I spent some time on the floor a few minutes ago explaining an amendment that I have. It is amendment No. 2820, as modified. The modification is at the desk. It is one of those things where there is no opposition at all.

We are trying to get to a new radar system that is—it is rather complicated. It will end up saving a lot of money and letting other people in other parts of the country—all over the country—have the radar capability they don't have today. So it is something I know that no reasonable person would object to.

Madam President, for that reason, I ask unanimous consent to set aside the pending amendment to call up my amendment No. 2820, as modified with the changes at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Kentucky.

Mr. PAUL. Madam President, the biggest issue of the day is how we protect ourselves from terrorism. My amendment goes to the heart of the matter.

Mr. INHOFE. Will the Senator yield for a question?

Mr. PAUL. Are we sufficiently vetting those who might come here and attack us from the Middle East?

Mr. INHOFE. Will the Senator yield? Mr. PAUL. I don't think we are. The two Boston bombers were here during the refugee program. Two Iraqi refugees came to my hometown—

Mr. INHOFE. Madam President, Parliamentary inquiry.

Mr. PAUL. Of Bowling Green, KY.

Mr. INHOFE. Parliamentary inquiry.

Mr. PAUL. I have an amendment that is not only pertinent—

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. PAUL. To the biggest issue of the day. I have an amendment that is germane.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. PAUL. For those who make a mockery of this process by saying we are going to have regular order, we are not going to have regular order—

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. PAUL. Until we address the issues of the day on a germane amendment.

I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Ms. COLLINS. Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. COLLINS. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

MORNING BUSINESS

Ms. COLLINS. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each, until 2 p.m. today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Ms. COLLINS. Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. COLLINS. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

TRANSPORTATION-HUD APPROPRIATIONS BILL

Ms. COLLINS. Madam President, for the information of our colleagues on both sides of the aisle, I would like to explain the situation we face. First, let me say that working very closely with the ranking member of the subcommittee, my friend and colleague Senator JACK REED, we have been making very good progress on this bill.

We have a number of amendments offered by Senators from both sides of the aisle that we have agreed to work out, to clear on both sides, with both managers of the bill. In some cases we have also gotten to the authorizing committees, the Budget Committee. In other words, a great deal of hard work has gone into clearing amendments that are ready to be considered, that could be accepted by voice vote or